

prosecutor, not an independent counsel, to again reveal the truth to the American people. Were there violations of the intent of the existing legislation that would prohibit these companies from dealing with so-called rogue nations? I think that this is absolutely essential to do, just simply out of respect for the rule of law. But also, if it is true, to demonstrate the moral deficit on the part of some and the hypocrisy on the part of some when it comes to this particular issue.

I yield back to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank my colleagues for not only raising these issues with regard to Medicare, but also with regard to Halliburton. I would certainly say to the gentleman from Massachusetts, I would be glad to join in that effort that the gentleman described tonight.

I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio and the gentleman from Massachusetts for participating in this special order tonight.

□ 2200

IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, good evening. I am happy to be back here with my colleagues to conduct another hour of Iraq Watch. We have been meeting one day a week, one evening a week for 1 hour for about 8 months now, since the invasion of Iraq was conducted and problems became apparent; and we have been trying to raise those questions here on the floor, asking for answers, and trying to educate the American public about the problems and challenges in Iraq. Since our last time on the floor, there have been amazing developments that I would like to talk about for a few minutes before turning to my colleagues and engaging in a discussion with them.

The big news is that President Bush, at long last, has agreed to appoint an independent commission to investigate the question of weapons of mass destruction and their presence in Iraq and to try to answer the unanswered questions about the weapons of mass destruction.

Now, on behalf of Iraq Watch, all I can say is, it is about time. We have been individually and as a group calling for an independent commission to investigate the controversy surrounding weapons of mass destruction since the very beginning of the Iraq Watch 8 months ago. I know, in particular, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) never miss an opportunity to call for such a commission to be appointed; and I have lent my voice to that as well. Finally,

the President has agreed that such a commission is needed.

Well, let us take a quick review of the situation and find out why President Bush now believes it is important for an independent commission to investigate the weapons of mass destruction and the performance of his administration, because I can tell my colleagues, President Bush does not like independent commissions. I do not think he did this lightly. I think he realizes that there is a huge question here, and it is not a political question; it is a question of national security. The issues that we are raising are not designed to raise political controversy, but to deal with our national safety. These are matters of national security.

Well, we all remember that President Bush and his administration stated in the summer and fall of 2002 with complete certainty that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and those weapons of mass destruction posed an imminent threat to America, to world peace, and to our national safety. There was not any hedging; there was not any doubt in the President's comments. There were not any hesitations or uncertainties expressed by any of the policy-makers in the Bush administration. They stated as fact that these weapons of mass destruction existed. They identified on maps where the weapons of mass destruction were located in Iraq. They even indicated how much those weapons weighed. They told us, we have 500 pounds over here; we have 300 pounds over there.

Now comes a year and a half later, Dr. David Kay, the CIA's chief weapons inspector in Iraq. And after working there for 7 or 8 months, he has announced, upon his retirement from that job, that the weapons of mass destruction do not exist and, in his opinion, did not exist during 2002 or at the time we went to war in 2003.

Now, it is, by the way, undeniable, Mr. Speaker, that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction in the 1980s. We know that. He used them in murderous ways against his own civilians, innocent civilians, the Kurds in Iraq. He also used them in murderous ways against the citizens in Iran, during the Iraq-Iran War. But the question is not whether he had them in the 1980s. The question is during the 1990s and the period of international sanctions and international inspections, did Hussein give up those weapons and did he have them at the time we went to war in 2003. David Kay says no. He has concluded they did not exist.

In addition to our general memory of how positive the President was, I can share with the House, as I have before, that I attended a briefing at the White House on October 2, 2002, 1 week before this House voted on the war resolution. That briefing was for a bipartisan group of Members, about 20 of us attended. It was one of several briefings the White House conducted during that time. The briefing was conducted in

the Roosevelt Room of the White House by CIA Director George Tenet and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. Ms. Rice and Mr. Tenet told us with complete certainty that weapons of mass destruction existed, that they believed Hussein was giving them to terrorists, that there was a link between Hussein and al Qaeda and, again, they knew where the weapons were. It was just a matter of invading and uncovering them and seizing them. One of my colleagues specifically asked George Tenet, Mr. Tenet, on a scale of 1 to 10, how certain are you that Saddam Hussein has reconstituted his nuclear weapons program? And Mr. Tenet answered, without hesitation, 10. He was completely certain.

Well, we now know that information was simply incorrect. In fact, we had a glimmer of the amount of exaggerations and deception when in the spring of 2003 rank-and-file Members of the House were finally allowed to see the classified intelligence reports from the fall of 2002, the Defense Intelligence Agency report of September of 2002, that said, in part, there was no credible evidence of a chemical stockpile of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and the national intelligence estimate of October of 2002 that was filled with uncertainties. That report said that we think, according to the CIA, that Hussein has weapons of mass destruction. We believe he may have this. We believe it is possible he has that. Then we discovered in the spring of 2003, when we saw these reports 6 months after they were made available to the White House that the President, when he talked to the public, forgot about all that uncertainty and told us, without a hesitation, that these weapons existed.

Well, it seems clear to me, and it has for some time, that we were led to war on half truths and deception and that America was misled and the Congress was misled by these statements regarding weapons of mass destruction.

Now, Saddam Hussein is in custody. Iraq and this country are better off with him in custody. But the fact of the matter is, our challenges in Iraq have been made much harder and much riskier because of the arrogance, the unilateralism, and the cowboy diplomacy of this administration.

Now, a few final comments about the commission, and I know my colleagues are anxious to join in this discussion. The President has finally called for an independent commission, something that all of us have called for; and we have been joined by the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE), who has called for an independent commission as well. There are questions remaining about how to set this up. One, of course, is who will be the members, and this will be critically important for the President to pick a bipartisan and independent group of commission members.

The timetable for reporting is important. Obviously, this commission should be given sufficient time to do

its job. I certainly hope, though, that there will not be any artificial attempt made to delay the report until after the election to protect anybody who may be embarrassed by its findings.

But most importantly of all is the scope of the commission's work. In my view, it must do two fundamental things. Certainly, it must review the accuracy of the intelligence-gathering and why our intelligence agencies were wrong about the possession and existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. But secondly, and just as importantly, this commission must review the use of that intelligence by the Bush administration to delve into why this material was so badly stated; why, when the Bush administration was told there were uncertainties about the weapons, why did they tell Congress and the American people that there was no uncertainty about the existence of those weapons. This commission must delve into both the intelligence-gathering and the use of that intelligence by the Bush administration.

Let me at this point turn now to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), who has been waiting patiently and who is a senior member of the Committee on International Relations and a leader on this issue.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the leadership he has brought to this issue.

I think it is important to remind our audience, and we are again joined by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), who is an original member of this ad hoc group that describe ourselves as the Iraq Watch, that it was 8 months ago that we began this effort. I think we are entitled to congratulate ourselves tonight. Because back then, we asked the congressional leadership and the President to depoliticize the issue of intelligence surrounding weapons of mass destruction and the allegations about links between al Qaeda and 9-11 on one side, and Saddam Hussein on the next. Obviously, our words fell on deaf ears.

But now we are in an election year, and the President thinks it is a good idea that he picks the members of this independent commission and that its proceedings be held in secrecy, so that the American people will not reach any conclusions prior to November's election.

Well, if he had heeded our advice and proceeded with an independent commission back 8 months ago, I dare say, given the work of David Kay and many others, that we would be well along the way; the American people would be informed, the administration would be informed, the House leadership would be informed, and we could be discussing these issues in a way that had no political overtones to it. But, again, it is this constant refusal to heed advice, to come in and have, if you will, a discussion on how we move forward together.

Many of us on this side of the aisle voted against the resolution because there did not appear to be a credible

case, and we were right. But now that we are there, let us go back and reexamine history. To have a historical record that is accurate is important for generations of Americans to come when this administration has enunciated a doctrine of preemption, a doctrine of preemption, and has created, in terms of the international order, a new norm that if you believe, you do not have to prove; but if you suspect, if you think, if you guess, you can launch a military strike against someone that you think may be a threat to you. I fear not just for America in terms of where we go from this point on; but situations that exist currently in the world, whether it be in the Middle East, whether it be in south Asia, between Pakistan and India, and all over the world, there are potentially volatile situations where a country can point to this Bush doctrine of preemption and launch a nuclear strike. That will have consequences for all humankind and particularly for America, and we will have set the norm. That is what disturbs me.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I do think it deserves a bit of reiteration that the Iraq Watch has been meeting some months now, and that the record is fully available, not only through the normal aspect of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, which is available to the population of the United States nationwide, but it is also available, I know, on the Web site that I have set up, and I believe other Members can do the same should they wish. What I am doing now for those who are listening and have an interest, it now is on my Web site. The Iraq Watch in its entirety appears.

□ 2215

So we have a kind of cyber-archive now of what we are doing with Iraq Watch. And it will be interesting, I think, in time to come to go back over it and see where we were, where we were going. Not because we are standing here on the sidelines, merely commenting as we go along, but rather we are trying to stimulate debate, trying to stimulate discussion, trying to stimulate the body politic through the means available to us here in the House.

We are the people's house. For those who just may be tuning in now, going down the cable channels and seeing C-SPAN, what are they talking about tonight, we are talking about our sons and daughters. We are talking about the blood and treasure of the United States. We are talking about the basic values of this country. We are talking about whether we are falling into the trap of a neo-imperialism, a 21st-century version of imperialism that would be anathema to values of the United States, the United States as we have known it and as we have wanted it to be.

And in that context, I would like to read an excerpt from David Fromkin's new book called: *A Peace to End All*

Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East. Again, for those who, and I will repeat it at the end of my excerpt as well, David Fromkin's "*A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of a Modern Middle East.*"

And I am quoting:

"Churchill, when he took office as Colonial Secretary [1921], brought with him a broad strategic concept of how to hold down the Middle East inexpensively. While he was still Secretary of Air and War [1919-20], Churchill had proposed to cut Middle East costs by governing Mesopotamia," which essentially is modern-day Iraq, "by means of airplanes and armored cars. A few well-protected air bases," he wrote at the time, "would enable the Royal Air Force to operate in every part of the protectorate and to enforce control now here, now there, without the need of maintaining long lines of communication, eating up troops and money."

"Viewing imperialism as a costly drain on a society that needed to invest all of its remaining resources in rebuilding itself, the bulk of the British press, public, and Parliament agreed to let the government commit itself to a presence in the Arab Middle East only because Winston Churchill's ingenious strategy made it seem possible to control the region inexpensively."

"Thus the belief, widely shared by British officials during and after the First World War, that Britain had come to the Middle East to stay at least long enough to reshape the region in line with European political interests, ideas, and ideals, was based on the fragile assumption that Churchill's aircraft-and-armored-car strategy could hold local opposition at bay indefinitely. In turn, that assumption was another expression of the underestimation of the Middle East that had typified British policy all along. It had shown itself when [Foreign Secretary Edward] Grey disdained the offer of an Ottoman alliance in 1911; when [Prime Minister Herbert] Asquith in 1914 regarded Ottoman entry in the war as being of no great concern; and when [War Minister Horatio] Kitchener, in 1915, sent his armies to their doom against an entrenched and forewarned foe at Gallipoli in an attack the British Government knew would be suicidal if the defending troops were of European quality. Kitchener's fatal assumption being that they were not."

"In 1922 the British Government had arrived at a political compromise with British society, by the terms of which Britain could assert her mastery in the Middle East, so long as she could do so at little cost. To British officials who underestimated the difficulties Britain would encounter in governing the region, who indeed had no conception of the magnitude of what they had undertaken, that meant Britain was in the Middle East to stay. In retrospect, however, it was an early indication

that Britain was likely to leave," unquote, from David Fromkin's "A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East."

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, is the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) suggesting that there is some similarity between the behavior of the British 90 years ago and their colonial ways and the behavior of America in Iraq?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting there is a direct parallel. I am suggesting that the history of the Middle East is not something that just suddenly occurred in 1990, or 1989 and 1990, with Saddam Hussein moving into what is now Kuwait.

I suggest that there is a history here, a long history here, a detailed history here. I suggest that mistakes were made in the past as to what could and could not be done in the Middle East, particularly in the area known as Mesopotamia; in other words, modern-day Iraq. And they are well on the way to making the same mistakes over again for the same reasons that they were made before, because we think that we can impose a United States' version of a 21st-century imperialism, and that all of the cards will fall on the table in place, that everything will operate as we wish it to operate and that we can in fact control events.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, what I find particularly ironic is the debate now, whether the original preference of the United States in terms of electing the interim council would be done by caucuses or whether there would be a direct election. And it would appear that this administration is somewhat confused, but it would appear that there they are sticking to this caucus concept and rejecting the direct election proposal put forth by a leading Shia cleric by the name of Seestani for direct elections. The Iraqis, it would appear, believe that they are capable of conducting an election. And we are saying no.

Well, I believe if there is one American principle, one American value that we cherish here in this particular institution and all across this land, it is one American, one vote. How about one Iraqi, one vote, with appropriate qualifications?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, is he aware that when Ayatollah Seestani sent people into the street or encouraged people to go into the street in these demonstrations, that the cry was one man one vote?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I was unaware of that. But maybe he had done his reading in terms of American history and our fight and our struggle to secure one vote for every person regardless of color, religion, ethnicity, whatever; something that we as Americans are to be proud of in exporting.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, it is of course one man, one vote, because our governing council recently ruled

that women would no longer have the political rights that they had under Saddam Hussein. We are going to take a step backward from Saddam Hussein's government who, at least on paper, had women as the equal of men when it came to their political rights.

So if the governing council that we appointed has its way, it will retreat from that which we have struggled to achieve in the United States. You may have ethnic equality, you may have racial equality, but you are not going to have gender equality. That is for sure. They really mean it when they say one man, one vote.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, is my colleague absolutely certain of that? Because I was unaware of that. I find that incredulous.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, oh, yes, I can tell the gentleman right now, there are women's groups organizing all over Iraq at the present time, demanding that they get their rights back from the group that we are supporting which is supposedly bringing them democratic freedom.

So the plain fact of the matter is that not only is this call out in the street for direct elections, but they are, in fact, utilizing the concept of a single person and a single vote, hopefully.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield. I have enjoyed this conversation, but I would like to take just a moment and call our colleagues' attention to something that is perhaps a little more home-bound and immediate in terms of my concerns.

I think we went into Iraq based on false information that was coming from the administration. But we are there now. But I think the American people need to know that when we went to war after the Afghanistan conflict, we sent our sons and daughters into harm's way without providing them with the most basic protection. And I am talking about this interceptor body armor which is comprised of a kevlar vest with inserts where they can put ceramic plates in both the front and the back.

And these ceramic inserts are capable, we are told, of stopping an AK-47 bullet. And we sent our soldiers into Iraq into a battle, life-and-death situation, without adequate protection. Now, this is after we were told that this vest was credited with saving some 19 lives during the Afghanistan conflict. So we knew this protection was effective.

And General Abizaid, when he was testifying before a Senate committee, was asked, why did we do this? And he said, and I am quoting, "I cannot say for the record why we chose to go to war with an insufficient supply of these vests."

Well, in May I got a letter from a young soldier in Iraq, one of my constituents, a West Point graduate, an Eagle Scout, the best kind of kid that this country can produce. And he was

in Iraq and he wrote me a letter. He said, "Congressman, my men are wondering why they are not given this protection. They have been given old Vietnam-era flak jackets that are capable of stopping fragments but are incapable of stopping these bullets."

So I wrote Secretary Rumsfeld a letter. And I asked the Secretary to please tell me how many soldiers had lost their lives without this protection. I asked him to please tell me when he could assure us that all of America's soldiers were protected with these vests. And I asked him to promise me that we would not provide these vests, these life-saving vests to foreign troops until all of our soldiers had been equipped.

The Secretary wrote me back and he said that they cannot answer my first question because they do not collect that information from the battlefield. So we do not know how many soldiers have been needlessly killed simply because they were not adequately protected.

In answer to my second question, he said that it was their expectation that all soldiers would be equipped with this vest by mid-November.

A couple of weeks later I get a follow-up letter from General Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And General Myers says, in answer to my third question, "Whether or not our troops are going to be protected before foreign troops," I am paraphrasing, "our State Department has entered into certain agreements with some of our coalition partners, and we are providing certain equipment to them; but we have been assured that the companies that are producing the equipment for the foreign troops do not have a contract with our government to provide these materials for our troops, but if they were to get such a contract from our government they would honor it first."

Well, the question that I have is, if we are trying to get these soldiers protected as rapidly as possible, and there is a company that is capable of producing these vests, why do they not have a contract with our government?

Well, so General Myers then said it will be mid-November before all of our troops are protected. So Secretary Rumsfeld says November and then General Myers in his letter says December. And then, lo and behold, right before we left here for Christmas, the Pentagon had a briefing and some of my staff were there and they said, Well, it is going to be January. Think of that. Months after this war started, we had many months leading up to the war, adequate time to prepare, to develop the equipment our troops needed, and it was not done.

□ 2230

So 10, 12, 13 months after the war started they are finally telling us, and I do not know if I can brief them, quite frankly, they are finally telling us that they have, in fact, gotten a sufficient supply of these vests to our troops.

Then the vehicles that are being driven, the Humvees and other military vehicles that are being driven in Iraq, we are here in the safety of this Chamber, and we are protected by the Capitol Police; and as we stand here, there are American soldiers in Iraq in hellish circumstances, and they are driving vehicles that are not armor plated.

I received an e-mail from a soldier in Iraq this week, and he told me of being out on patrol and of one of his colleagues being shot by a sniper. The bullet went through both sides of his face and lodged in his shoulder.

We have got soldiers over there, the least we can do, the least we can do is to give them the best protection possible. And I am outraged, I am stunned that after all the billions of dollars we have allocated for this war that the leadership of this administration, our Secretary of Defense, our Pentagon officials, have failed to adequately protect our soldiers.

I have gone to funerals of soldiers who have come back from Iraq, a 20-year-old, I remember going to his funeral, a young man who was abandoned by his parents as a child, reared by his grandmother, a 20-year-old who had purchased the engagement ring for his fiancée before he left for Iraq. He simply wanted to be able to afford an education. So he joins our military hoping that that will be a route to get an education; and he comes back as a 20-year-old, and we bury him on a hill overlooking the Ohio River. Ironically, he had drowned in the Tigris River as he had jumped into that water to try to save his sergeant who had fallen in and he sunk, and it was 12 or 14 days before they found his body.

It disturbs me, it disturbs me that decisions were made to send our troops into war, and we did not provide them with the protection they need and deserve. Somebody needs to answer how that happened, why it happened; and more importantly, they need to ensure us that it will never, never, never happen again.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, to corroborate the gentleman's point, and I think it is important for my colleagues and for the people that may be watching this conversation among us tonight, that the gentleman is not speaking alone. That much of what he said was corroborated by the United States Army in a 504-page internal Army history of this war written by the Army's Combined Armed Senate at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas. Much of what you said is part of that particular study. That study was reported on today in the New York Times.

Let me just quote from part of that report in the New York Times: "The first official Army history of the Iraq war reveals that American forces were plagued by a morass of supply shortages, logistical problems which senior Army officials played down at the time were much worse than have been previously reported. Tank engines on warehouse shelves in Kuwait with no

truck drivers to take them north; broken down trucks were scavenged for usable parts; artillery units cannibalized parts from captured Iraqi guns to keep their Howitzers operating; Army medics foraged medical supplies from combat hospitals."

This comes from an Army report, not from a politician, whether that politician be a Republican or a Democrat, speaking at a press conference. This is the United States Army. The study goes on to note that the strategy employed by the political leadership, Secretary Rumsfeld is answerable for this, in his Deputy Under Secretary Wolfowitz, and Assistant Secretary Fife and the entire crowd. The study notes that "the strategy of starting the war before all support troops were in place taxed the post-war resources of local commanders who in many cases were shifting back and forth between combat operations and the task of civil services. Local commanders were torn between their fights and providing resources, soldiers' time and logistics, to meet civilian needs," the report concluded, "partially due to the scarce resources. As a result of the running start, there was not simply enough to do both missions."

Talk about a disaster that has resulted in untold sacrifice of American soldiers, has set us back in terms of the reconstruction of Iraq. All for what? Because we do know now, we do know now that despite, despite what the White House did say, the threat from Iraq was not imminent. Remember those words?

The White House spokesman Scott McClellan in July of this year, "Iraq was the most dangerous threat of our time." His predecessor in May of 2003 in response to a question whether the threat from Iraq was imminent, his answer, "Absolutely." Again, McClellan, the spokesperson for President Bush in February of last year said, "This is about imminent threat." The Vice President himself on January of last year, "Iraq poses terrible threats to the civilized world."

President Bush, himself, in November of 2002, "The world is also uniting to answer the unique and urgent threat posed by Iraq whose dictator has already used weapons of mass destruction to kill thousands."

But now, what does the White House spokesperson say? "Some in the media have chosen to use the word 'imminent.' Those were not words we used."

Give me a break, Mr. McClellan. You lose credibility by saying that. Be honest, be honest. You were wrong. Admit it and restore confidence in America and in the White House, not just for the benefit of the American people, but for the benefit of American prestige in our role in this world to enhance democracy in every corner of the planet.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for Mr. McClellan or anyone else to do that when the President himself in the space of the last week or so has indicated at least twice

that he did not know the facts, that he was anxious to find out what the facts were, that he too, presumably meaning "in addition" would like to find out what was going on or what had happened.

Now, this is the President of the United States. Hundreds of people are dead, thousands of people have been grievously wounded.

Speaking of the prestige that the gentleman referred to, that has been literally destroyed the world over. We now have the Secretary, the spectacle, the spectacle of the Secretary of the State now wondering whether or not he would have made the same recommendations had he had other information, at the same time when many of us here were saying, let us take a deep breath, let us be sure we know what we are doing. The inspections are working; the inspections were under-way.

We were not getting the information back that the administration wanted to hear. That is the difficulty. My memory is not in such difficult straits that I cannot recall what happened during those times. I realize we are now at a point that would understand only too well where inconvenient thought is shoved down the memory hole. We simply put it out of sight and pretend it did not happen. The plain fact of the matter is that there were cries all across this country, an outcry all across the country saying that the inspection process has not yet completed its task. We need to do that at a minimum before we go to war.

It is one thing for people to talk about supporting the troops. It is one thing to talk about whether the definition of imminent is the same for everybody across the spectrum, but you cannot say that a political policy which has failed to do the minimum necessary before there is a commitment to war is something that needs to be defended in the name of defending the troops.

Mr. McClellan or the President, neither Mr. McClellan speaking for the President nor Mr. Bush can get off that easy, nor can they claim that this is a situation that needs now to be explored in the aftermath of this tragedy.

I submit that we are now in a situation that needs further explanation. My understanding now is that we have announced that we are going to be leaving on the 30th of June of this year. We are now in February. March, April, June. We are talking about in 100 days we are ostensibly going to turn over authority to somebody or something in Iraq. Is there anybody here who can tell me who is going to have authority, what institutional framework or structure is going to exercise that authority? I cannot find out who it is.

Is it going to be United Nations inspectors? No, they have been told they were inadequate. Is it going to be United Nations observers or administrators in some form? They left. I understand that the United States now in

some fashion is in discussions with them as to whether they will come back in. To do what? With whom?

It is very interesting, one need only go to this issue of the New York Times Magazine for February 1, this past Sunday, and this article on what the Shiites really want. A quote from a U.S. official, "We can fight the Sunnis, but we cannot fight the Shiites, not if they organize against us. There are too many of them."

Is that what we have been reduced to? Is that what the policies are involved here? If you want to talk about imminent danger, how about the imminent danger of people demanding direct elections so that they can conduct their own affairs.

This is the situation that we find ourselves in today. This is the situation that we have to confront. This is a situation that will not allow us to continue to merely stand on the side and observe the President trying to get the facts. He should have had the facts before he committed us into war. And he should get the facts now on what it takes in order for us to be able to exert such influence as we can in a positive way now that we have entered into this imperialist dream of imposing our authority on Iraq in the wake of Saddam Hussein's capture.

Mr. HOFFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the questions of the gentleman, but I hope he is not turning to me to give him some answers because I cannot begin to answer these very legitimate questions he has raised about what comes next, what does the Bush administration think will happen at the end of June when we turn over civil authority at this point to a completely unknown local or international or some form of alternative government or group. These questions are important, and we are nowhere close to having an answer.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Does the gentleman know what the CIA says?

Mr. HOFFFEL. I am afraid to ask.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Back about a week ago in the Miami Herald this is what the CIA said in response to a question posed by the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE).

□ 2245

They said in the Miami Herald, in a commentary on the President's State of the Union address, which would lead one to believe that things were fine and that peace and order and democracy were just around the corner, well, the CIA offices in Iraq, in the field, are warning that the country may be on a path to civil war. And they are very, very concerned and very, very disturbed.

Again, it is all about just be honest. The American people can deal with the truth. We can have a debate that is respectful. We can address problems and we can move forward together, but if you do not tell us the truth, that is when we are in trouble.

Mr. HOFFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentleman from Massachu-

setts (Mr. DELAHUNT) on that point. That is an excellent point, and part of the problem we are having is that the President and the Vice President continue to spin the issue of weapons of mass destruction. The Vice President in the last couple of weeks still talks about those trailers being the place where weapons of mass destruction were being manufactured. David Kay laughs about that and says, no, they were not.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Everybody laughs about it.

Mr. HOFFFEL. They were perhaps making rocket fuel. More likely, making helium for weather balloons, but they were not making weapons of mass destruction. But the Vice President continues to suggest that that was happening.

The President himself in the State of the Union address that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) just referenced, in the face of the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, in my view, continued to try to confuse the situation and fool the American people by talking about the fact that Mr. Kay himself, who was in the process of saying there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the President quoted Mr. Kay as talking about weapons of mass destruction-related program activities. And I do not have a clue what is a weapons of mass destruction-related program activity.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Neither does any other American have a clue. You talk about gibberish.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman would yield, I think I can provide you with an answer of what a weapons of mass destruction-related program activity was.

Mr. HOFFFEL. At last, an answer.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I will be happy to do so. What we have discovered, we said if we can only get to those Iraqi scientists, they have the answer, which was just what was going to happen with the U.N. inspectors. What did we find out when we got to those scientists? The scientists told us that they were destroying the weapons of mass destruction and that the program activity was destroying the weapons of mass destruction. That is what the activity was, and these scientists were doing it, and they had papers to show it. If we could just get to the papers of those Iraqi scientists, that would tell us what happened. Yes, they destroyed the weapons of mass destruction.

What Saddam Hussein was doing, a ruthless lying dictator, was ruthlessly lying about what he was doing. He wanted to give the illusion that there were these weapons, because he wanted to give the illusion that he was some great and powerful dictator, and we were buying it. That is the problem here is that we are actually relying on the veracity of a lying, ruthless dictator.

Maybe part of the reason for that is we have been relying on his goodwill

all along anyway. If I have to hear one more time about weapons that were used on his own people, I would like to ask the President, was that before or after the Secretary of Defense in another capacity was congratulating him for it and getting his picture taken with him and shaking his hands? Was that before or after this country was giving approval to Saddam Hussein to use those weapons and making certain that he knew that that was not going to interfere with our support, tacit or otherwise, for his war against Iran?

So, yes, there were program activities all right, program activities that we needed to know about in detail so that we could present an accurate and truthful picture to the American people.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can, we certainly know the gentleman is absolutely correct. If we want to talk about weapons of mass destruction program-related activities, let us go back to that point in time when the current Secretary of State, Colin Powell, was the National Security Adviser and when the current Vice President, Mr. CHENEY, was the Secretary of Defense.

What I find particularly fascinating is, as Dr. Condoleezza Rice just said, if I can find the quote, she said just recently, he used weapons of mass destruction, just as the gentleman indicates. The truth was that we were transferring to him the computers and the ingredients necessary to advance his nuclear weapons program. That happened.

We, the United States Government, during the 1980s under Reagan and President George Herbert Walker Bush, were removing him from the terrorist list, installing an embassy in Baghdad, providing intelligence to Saddam Hussein in the war against Iran. And when it came to that horrific incident in Chalabi where he used chemical weapons against the Kurds who had aligned themselves with the Iranians, there was a condemnation, let us call it lip service. And yet, when this institution, this House and the United States Senate in 1989 and 1990 attempted to impose sanctions on the Saddam Hussein regime, you know what the position of the administration was then, led by the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Adviser? They killed the bill. They killed the bill.

Now, if hypocrisy was a virtue—

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. We would be up to our eyeballs in it.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you.

Mr. HOFFFEL. Let me respond or add on to the comments of the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) about the Iraqi scientist, because Dr. Kay has also reported on what he believes may explain part of the incredible inaccuracy of our intelligence work regarding the weapons of mass destruction. He believes that some of those Iraqi scientists that you referred to were actually conning Hussein; that they were telling Hussein that they had had these programs; they needed

more money; they were on the verge of developing the weapons that this murderous dictator was interested in developing. Hussein apparently believed that con, and kept giving them money for their research and for their development, and some of that money was skimmed off the top through base corruption by these scientists and all the rest.

What is amazing is the suggestion from Dr. Kay that our intelligence agencies fell for the con, too. We were conned by the con. We picked up the communications of the Iraqi scientists to Hussein, and we believed those communications, and so that is why we felt that the weapons of mass destruction were well developed and in existence when, in fact, they were not.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, having been a probation officer at one time in my checkered career, I can tell my colleagues a little bit about con men and how they operate. I will tell you how a con succeeds. A con succeeds not because of the special insight of the one perpetrating the con. The person who does that, the con man, is not depending on the desire of the other person to have the conclusion that they want to have come out. It is preordained they want the con. You cannot succeed with a con unless the other person is playing into it with you. They think they are getting something for nothing, or they think that something they want very much to be real is actually going to happen. You are going to win; you are going to succeed; you are going to be able to work the angle; you are going to be able to get something that somebody else does not have.

All you have to do is look at the record of the desire of the advisers to Mr. Bush and their determination to reenter the Middle East along the same lines as I read from the Churchill imperial era, and to come back into with their version in the 21st century, they want those weapons to be there. They wanted to take any scrap of information that came in and turn it into proof positive that what they wanted to do and the policies they wanted to follow of going in there and having a war with Iraq was something that was substantiated by the information that they were getting. It did not matter that it may have gone the other way. It did not matter it was ambiguous, tenuous, or that it was fragments.

What mattered was, is something was being said about it, and they were bound and determined to turn that into information which could be construed as being supportive of having to go to war. No matter what happened, they were going to go to war.

I find it very, very instructive that the Secretary of the Treasury's book that has just come out has been denounced along with him. He apparently has turned into an apostate, too, in the process simply by saying that these impressions and his honest impression

as related in his book was that from the moment he entered service to the Bush administration, that they were determined to go to war; that no matter what happened they were going to go to war.

So as we take a look at this and see what happened in the past, that, it seems to me, is prelude to the future. And so I suggest for our upcoming Iraq Watches that we take up the question, then, of what is going to happen on June 30; who are we going to be dealing with; what are the circumstances under which authority is to be turned over in Iraq by the United States; is this going to be yet another election ploy? Because the Bush administration is trying to use support for troops being synonymous with support for the war for election year purposes now, and I am very anxious to find out whether this transfer of authority is also going to be used for election purposes or are we going to actually be able to do something that will advance democracy in Iraq. I think we need to concentrate on that.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think it is interesting the gentleman talked about the former Secretary of the Treasury, and I think we all respect his candor and honesty, and I think for many of us it certainly is not surprising. I think probably, and I do not know whether our audience is aware of this, but one starts to see a subtle change in the position of some members of the administration.

For example, Secretary Powell was reported yesterday in the Washington Post, he said he does not know now whether he would have recommended an invasion of Iraq if he had been told it had no stockpiles of banned weapons, even as he offered a broad defense of the Bush administration's decision to go to war.

What we are going to start to see now is a shift in the language. We are going to go from clearly there were weapons of mass destruction, this is where they are, these are the quantities, and that is going to go to the weapons of mass destruction program-related activities. Now we are going to see attempts by senior administration officials to rewrite history. But I think what is most important from this point on is for those that are in denial, because they have I think almost a psychological hold in terms of their belief, we should ask them to accept reality. Let us move on, let us work together in a bipartisan, bicameral basis and to go forward, understand where we failed in terms of this policy, and see that at least the Iraqi people have an opportunity for a democratic future, and as quickly as possible reduce the exposure of American military personnel and the absolutely heavy burden that the American taxpayers are bearing, with no help from anybody else in the world.

□ 2300

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. And none likely to come.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And none to come. Remember that conference in Madrid? That was all about loans. Our allies are loaning, expecting the money back; but American taxpayers, we give it away. We give it away in this body. That is what we do. We just shove it out the door. Well, that is indeed unfortunate.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for joining in Iraq Watch this week. We will be back next week. We are going to look at the commission and what happens June 30th, and we look forward to talking next week.

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as the prior speakers were dealing with the foreign wars in which the United States is engaged, here at home the Bush administration has built an economy teetering on a house of cards, or should I say an exploding house of debt.

There is more economic anxiety in our country than at any time that I can remember since the Reagan recession of 1982. President Bush is trying to act as if nothing is wrong, but people know better. They know something is wrong, something deeply wrong with America's economy here at home. They know that jobs are going overseas by the thousands, and they do not know how much worse things are going to get before they get better, or if they are ever going to get better.

More and more people are wondering whether our jobs are ever going to come back. In my district, almost every week brings the news of another plant closing. This week it is Georgia Pacific, maker of Dixie Cups, leaving Sandusky, Ohio, and 206 long-time workers terminated. Hundreds and hundreds of family-owned tool and die and machine tool businesses in Ohio and the Midwest have fallen victims of unregulated competition from China.

The manufacturing sector in the Nation's heartland is in the intensive care unit, and President Bush is offering Band-aids. He was in Ohio last week, he came to us empty-handed, but then he went around the country and raised millions more for his campaign coffers. In his State of the Union address delivered here, he did not even propose extending unemployment benefits for those workers who have lost their jobs.

There is great economic anxiety in our land because workers do not know how much longer they can hold on to their health benefits. There is great economic anxiety in our land because people see Congress and the President giving \$87 billion to Iraq and the President's corporate cronies, but leaving 43 million Americans without health care coverage.

There is great economic anxiety because the average American family